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TAGS: [PREL](#) [ETRD](#) [PHUM](#) [CU](#) [NL](#)
SUBJECT: NETHERLANDS/CUBA: DUTCH EXPECT EU TO DROP
SANCTIONS

REF: A. STATE 62450 / GIAUQUE EMAIL 6-6-08
[B](#). THE HAGUE 458
[C](#). FALLS-OTALLAH EMAIL 06-04-08
[D](#). FALLS-TLSMITH EMAIL 06-03-08

Classified By: Political Officer Eric Falls for reasons 1.5(b, d)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Dutch MFA officials expect the EU to drop (the currently suspended) sanctions against Cuba. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (C) On June 13, Charge spoke with MFA Deputy Director for the Western Hemisphere Department, Jos Schellaars, who indicated that the EU is likely to lift the Cuba sanctions. Schellaars noted that he was "not at all certain the Czechs will block" consensus on this, but then in an aside added "well you never know what will happen." He also stated that the Dutch will continue to press the Cubans to release political prisoners. Dutch MFA Cuba desk officer Jan Jaap Groenemeijer, in a conversation with poloff, could not confirm whether the EU would drop sanctions during the June 16 GAERC. According to Groenemeijer, it was impossible to say what the ministers will do behind closed doors -- he was "unsure if the minority will bow under pressure." Groenemeijer explained that the "minority" is a single nation, with one additional nation undecided on its position. Groenemeijer added that there were rumors the EU could even delay the decision on Cuba. Groenemeijer concluded that FM Verhagen wants to "guarantee results" from any dialogue with Cuba, following the goals of the EU Common Position to advance human rights and obtain the release of political prisoner.

[1](#)3. (C) Also on June 13, Dutch MFA Deputy EU Correspondent Rochus Pronk indicated that the EU's COREPR was scheduled to meet early on June 16, ahead of the ministers meeting, to confirm an agreement to drop sanctions. However, there is time to confer over the weekend on the "bracketed" text. Pronk was not sure if Cuba would be a full "A point" and approved by the ministers without discussion. He noted that FM Verhagen was "reluctant" to drop the sanctions, believing the moment was not quite right, but that the decision to drop contemplates the EU evaluation Cuba's progress in human rights in one year's time.

[1](#)4. (C) On June 12, MFA Director for the Western Hemisphere Department, Laurent Stokvis, told poloff that the EU policy toward Cuba would not be rational if some nations were engaging Cuba but others were not. According to Stokvis, twenty-five EU members support ending the sanctions policy, one nation wants to maintain it, and one is looking for middle ground. On June 4, Stokvis told poloff that he "would not be surprised" if the EU reached agreement on ending the sanctions (ref C). Stokvis had just returned from Brussels discussions, where they were debating the issue. In Stokvis, view, the EU's two-track policy isn't credible if the EU cannot engage Cuba. The Dutch would be "less than content" if the sanctions were ended (Comment: meaning that the Dutch would be pleased but not elated if the sanctions

are ended. End comment.)

15. (C) On June 3, Charge met with MFA Deputy Director for the Western Hemisphere Department, Jos Schellaars, who said he was "optimistic" about Cuba as "things are changing rapidly." They have released some prisoners and are "talking to dissidents." "Once it (liberalization) starts, you can only stop it with significant force."
Gallagher